



State of Connecticut

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Testimony

In support of H.B. 6519 An Act Concerning The Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

Public Health Committee
March 15, 2011

Senator Gerratana, Senator Welch, Representative Johnson, Representative Srinivasan and distinguished members of the committee; I come before you today in strong support of HB 6519, AN ACT CONCERNING THE LABELING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD

It wasn't long ago that I didn't know what a GMO was until I met a young woman from my town, Tara Cook-Littman who is a passionate advocate on this issue. Once informed, I realized there was a large group of people who do know what GMO's and want to know if they're eating it.

Connecticut residents deserve to know where their food comes from and how it is grown. By labeling our food, consumers are able to make informed choices, yet we are one of the only developed countries without GMO labeling laws. More than 40 countries including Japan, Australia, Russia, and China all require labeling of GMO's, while the United States does not. Over 20 years ago the FDA determined that GMO foods did not be labeled because they were not materially different from their conventional counterparts. However, many facts state otherwise.

According to a study conducted by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, seventy percent of processed foods sold in grocery stores contain at least one GM ingredient. The US is the largest producer of GM foods in the world with 69 million hectares under cultivation and a 43% market share. We also grow the widest variety of GM crops in the world including corn,

cotton, soy, canola, and sugar beets, just to name a few. When US manufacturers export these foods, they must segregate supply chains and comply with the labeling laws of other countries. The residents of Connecticut have no way of knowing whether the vegetable oils, sugars, breads, crackers, cookies, or ice cream we're buying are made with GMO ingredients. Currently the only product labels available to guide consumer purchases away from GMOs are USDA Certified Organic and Non-GMO Project verified. Regardless of what your position might be, I think we should all agree, our constituents deserve the right to read a label that lists all the ingredients in the food they buy.

I urge you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,
Brenda L. Kupchick